

WARRE 1

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US EPA RECORDS CENTER REGION 5

Plant cleanup moves ahead

The EPA's on-site coordinator had been called away to deal with the anthrax contamination in Washington.

By AMANDA C. DAVIS
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WARREN — The cleanup of the former Mahoningside Power Plant is inching along, and officials say the city is in line for more federal money.

The city says remaining work at the site should cost \$571,000 and includes filling the basement area with soil containing asbestos, encapsulating it in the basement, tearing down above-ground structures, testing for contaminants and grading and seeding the property.

Funding: City council agreed in January to pay about \$64,000 to McCabe Engineering of Richfield for the work. The money comes from a \$200,000 brownfield grant.

It also agreed to raise the cap on project expenditures from \$2.33 million to about \$3 million.

Dave Robison, city director of engineering, said McCabe was authorized this week to begin removing water from the flooded basement area and to notify the city which jobs will need to be bid out.

Filling and encapsulating the basement will begin soon, he said.

The city expects to receive additional brownfield money and will seek other state and federal funds to help with the property, Robison said.

President Bush has announced that his fiscal year 2003 budget will double the funds available through the Environmental Protection Agency from \$98 million to \$200 million to help with brownfield sites.

The budget also includes \$25 million for urban redevelopment and brownfield cleanup through the Department of Housing and Urban De-

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velopment.

Robison said a private concern is interested in "partnering" with the city on the project. Officials have not named the interested party.

Cleanup efforts: The city began cleanup in March 1999 when two smokestacks were razed. The property, which sits on a 5-acre site along the Mahoning River, was vacant for many years.

The EPA took over management of the site when the discovery of contaminants complicated cleanup efforts.

PCBs, which are suspected cancer-causing agents, have been reduced at the site to a level acceptable to the EPA.

Mark Durno, on-site coordinator for the EPA's Cleveland office, said the agency is investigating to see who's responsible for the contamination.

The extent of PCBs was a surprise that caused a "major roadblock" and delayed remediation, Durno said, and cleanup rid the property of all contamination that could pose an imminent threat to human health and the environment, including the Mahoning River.

Durno and Mick Hans, spokesman for the EPA's Chicago office, said during a phone conference Thursday that Mahoningside was a "time-critical" project that required cleanup of contaminants within six months of discovery.

Delay: Durno's work on Mahoningside and other projects was put off when he was called to Washington, D.C., for emergency response at the Hart Senate Building, where anthrax was discovered.

Hans, who went to New York after Sept. 11 to help out in the EPA press office, said the agency has had to prioritize projects around the tragedy.

Redevelopment plans for Mahoningside could include commercial structures or a tie-in to the city's nearby Riverwalk project, which will include paths, an outdoor amphitheater and festival grounds.

Grass should be growing on the site by summer, Robison said.

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